



Referendum Update
April 17, 2026

A special meeting was held on Friday morning to publicly discuss placing a referendum on the ballot in November. This referendum would generate approximately \$70 million for salary increases and school programs.

The meeting began with a presentation by the CFO, Mrs. Deidra Whittenberger, explaining the difference between a referendum and a sales tax, a comparison of economic information for comparable districts in Central Florida, and a review of current legislative issues that could impact local school districts if certain bills become law. Additionally, the state has not finalized their budget which creates uncertainties for school districts. The CFO ended her presentation by stating that referendum timing should consider operational needs and external economic and legislative conditions.

We, Matt and I, were also invited to address the board and share information. We presented the board with local polling data, data from the 33 districts that currently have a referendum/millage, and a timeline of actions to launch a successful referendum campaign.

A discussion followed that included many questions about who would receive the money, how the money would be distributed, and the collaborative process required to successfully complete this work. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) needs to be agreed upon to delineate these and other terms. Additionally, the members of the board requested a final draft of the Resolution language which would be sent to the County Council to put this on the ballot in November. Additional information was requested about the Political Action Committee (PAC) process that would be required to run a referendum campaign.

The Superintendent shared her experience with prior referendum campaigns in other districts. Dr. Balgobin acknowledged that this process requires significant effort from all parties and emphasized the importance of a clear, transparent education campaign that explains the district's budget and the factors that impact it, including vouchers and charter schools.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Balgobin recommended that the board move forward with the referendum process. The board voted to approve the recommendation. This means that we will now work with the district to provide the requested clarifications and documents. We will present the documents and additional information during the May 12th board meeting.

If you support putting a referendum on the ballot in November, we need you to be at the May 12th board meeting. As employees, citizens of this community, and voters; your presence matters.

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth